LPO Team Leader Recommended Training Needs

TEAM LEADER MEETINGS

Team Leaders should be given the opportunity to meet among themselves with a member of management at least every two weeks (preferably across LPO) to allow for a pseudo cross-functional team although they all hold the same team leader classification. The importance of having a controlled atmosphere allows for consistent information to be heard by all, as well as, ensuring that all team leaders progress at a pace that is conducive for meeting the overall business needs. Agendas can be curtailed to topics within understanding their new roles and/or problem solving within invitations sent out to maintenance, engineering, quality control, etc. Notes (matrix) should be utilized.

HOW TO HOLD A MEETING

I'm pretty sure that all team leaders selected has attended a meeting before or during their time with B-F, however, it is much different "driving a car then riding in one". First, team leaders should understand the ground rules of conducting a meeting, such as: 1) having an agenda, 2) maintaining order, 3) staying on schedule, etc. After the ground rules have been covered, it is imperative that the team leaders understand the overall objective or purpose for holding a meeting. In such, recognizing problems and how to solve them among their core group or soliciting specific organizations (maintenance, production, quality control, processing, shipping, etc) to assist in problem resolution. Skill-sets need to be heightened at the end of the meeting as to learn how to analyze the data and make decisions based off what was discussed.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This area is very touchy! In many cases a new (or seasoned) team leader will adapt in their role so well that they will either be a dominant leader and/or subject to a combative peer, coworker, or another member of management. Although I personally like to see a team leader take charge it is extremely difficult to get long term gains when an operator is influencing his/her coworkers without having the authority. Many team leaders will have to be reminded of the overall business objective and be redirected to "the big picture". Team ownership is important but when the behavior of the team is obviously functioning under duress or "hostile setting", it is very important for one to recognize that you cannot dominate the situation because you can. Eventually the team will be a pawn of the team leaders. This subject matter could be taught to the teams as well. I've notice that many people on the floor feel as though they don't have merit or "say so" because they ONLY work the floor. When challenged with an opposing opinion, they fold!

PROBLEM SOLVING

8-D (8 Step Discipline Process), 5 W's (Why, When, Where, What, Who), Cause and Effect, Fish Bone diagrams, Is Is, Is Not….regardless of the problem-solving technique used team leaders need to be made aware of the different approaches to problem solving. I believe this to be extremely important! We find solutions to problems all the time,

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however, unless you understand the costs that go in with recommendations your effort may be for naught! Team leaders may be less likely to suggest solutions if they don't see any progress or action on their recommendation. Team leaders that are familiar with problem solving techniques generally understand that you weigh cost in all proposals. Further, when suggestions are submitted to management most items that are needed to make a sound decision have already been considered by the presenter.

BODY LANGUAGE

Small amount of time should be taken on body language; nonetheless, it is important to cover this area. Some team leaders will perform well right off the bat but we cannot afford to keep changing team leaders early on because they "pissed" off everyone around them. I envision role play an integral part of the team leader's training in attempts to revolve issues like this one.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Again, a small amount of time should be given to this area, but it is extremely important just the same. A representative from (EAP) can come in and teach a class in about 2 ½ hours. As team leaders began to work closely with their teams they probably will be the first ones to recognize behavior changes related to drugs, alcohol, mental issues, etc.

UNDERSTANDING CHARTS: METRICS AND PARETOS

At a minimum team leaders should understand how to read the metrics that we have posted in our team rooms; thence, present the information to the teams! Teams tend to listen more closely to a team leader than a member of management. After having clarity with Metrics and Pareto charts, team leaders should be exposed to simple tracking sheets that can be utilized on the floor. For example, QC wants to know how many bottles break at the labeler in an hour. They are many other examples that we can use, but in a nutshell, we can have ownership and real time data to review.

MANAGING CHANGE

Although our focus should be to place emphasis on process mapping, it is critical that we teach team leaders how to adapt to change. Whether that is people, equipment, supplies, or quality we need to assess each team leader for their ability to prioritize tasks. They may not really understand that they are managing the situation, and if we are not careful, the situation will manage them. Extremely difficult to get the team leader's confidence back up when they have had a "minor" setback.

PRESENTING PROBLEMS TO MANAGEMENT

Touched on this in Problem Solving, however, I believe this topic warrants further attention. Hopefully, everyone knows before you present a problem to your boss you

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should bring several possible solutions. The team leader will hopefully need only a little guidance should this situation occur (and it will).

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF A TEAM LEADER

1) What is a team leader?
2) What is NOT a team leader?

The two questions above should be covered in depth. It is very important to cover this matter in a group setting and provide examples of a good team leader and bad team leader.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

Everyone has a particular leadership style that defines their personality or should I say your personality defines your leadership style. Does your style fit your team? Does it fit into the B-F culture? Can your leadership style handle criticism? Will need input from Team Advisors…. Kind of like a golf swing, if the new team leader has any bad habits it is important to resolve them as soon as they are noticed.

RECAPITUATION

Macaire and Reggie,

The above suggestions represent my experiences with team leaders at Ford Motor Company. Many more training opportunities exist but I felt these stood out given the fact that we started from the ground up. As of Oct 2006, it's my understanding that Ford Motor Co plans to restructure its organization to get rid of all first line supervisors and let the team leaders run the areas. Many of these items I could talk to but I do have recommendations for a trainer that could come in and teach most of the core subjects.